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Advancement of women: advancement of women

Note verbale dated 18 December 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit herewith the resolution adopted at the International Conference on Women's Entrepreneurship as a Factor of Sustainable Development, held in Minsk on 10 October 2017 (see annex).

The Permanent Mission would be grateful if the present note and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 28 (a).

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Please recycle

Annex to the note verbal dated 18 December 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Resolution

We, participants of the international conference entitled "Women's Entrepreneurship as a Factor of Sustainable Development", held on 10 October 2017 in Minsk as part of Sustainable Development Weeks 2017, facilitated by the Belarus Support Programme of the Federal Government of Germany and the project of the United Nations Development Programme in support of the National Coordinator for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Strengthening the Role of the Parliament in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, having

Heard presentations, exchanged opinions and information relating to the issues under discussion,

Taken note of practical experiences and research findings in this field, and

Reaffirmed our ambition to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Express our appreciation to the National Coordinator for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Institute of Economics of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the United Nations Development Programme, the Belarus Support Programme of the Federal Government of Germany, and the Belarusian Union of Women for organizing and convening the conference, and

Agree that:

- The Sustainable Development Goals highlight the priorities of the Republic of Belarus with respect to improving its social and economic policies;
- Gender equality is a necessary precondition for sustainable development and essential for realizing human rights and ensuring social justice;
- A variety of national instruments, approaches and lessons learned that take into account the particularities of the regions and the interests of local communities comprise an invaluable resource for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the country and its regions.

The conference participants concluded that:

Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality could be achieved in Belarus by consistently applying a gender-sensitive policy to foster an environment in which women can reach their fullest potential;

To achieve Sustainable Development Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, priority must be given to developing market relations and establishing the business sector as one of the primary engines of income growth for the country's population;

Progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, in the context of the issues under discussion, hinges on the deployment of digital technologies, the adoption of new approaches to managing the economies of the country and its regions and the introduction of innovative local business initiatives;

Sustainable Development Goal 10 on reduced inequalities can be achieved in the country's regions, cities and rural settlements through the implementation of an effective regional policy that encourages self-employment and fosters entrepreneurship and by amplifying the role of local government agencies and self-governing bodies;

Effective collaboration among government agencies, local authorities, the parliament, civil society organizations, the business sector and international organizations, as well as the mobilization of civil society, would enable the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 17.

With regard to gender equality, the conference participants recommend the following:

The principles of gender equality should be broadly applied in matters relating to development and management;

The goal of achieving gender equality should be incorporated into strategic documents that govern social and economic development in the Republic of Belarus;

Projects to expand employment opportunities for women and to create jobs that enable women to reach their full potential should be updated;

State support should be granted to ensure that women have improved access to financial tools for business development and realization of entrepreneurial initiatives;

Enhanced measures should be taken to promote gender equality within the family;

Enhanced legislation should be adopted to eradicate all forms of domestic violence;

Information support should be provided to promote the ideas of gender equality;

Legal mechanisms should be created requiring gender-based assessments of key strategic documents and social and economic development programmes and such assessments should be conducted;

Gender-sensitive budgeting tools should be integrated at the national and local levels to ensure de facto equality between men and women;

An inclusive public dialogue should be held to discuss issues relating to gender equality to obtain feedback from all society stakeholders.

With regard to supporting women's entrepreneurship in the country and its regions, the conference participants recommend the following:

Women should be encouraged to pursue self-employment and entrepreneurial activity;

Effective means of support for new businesses should be made available, including microcredit, material support, consulting services and information and communications technology;

Economic activity should be liberalized, procedures for establishing and operating a business venture should be streamlined and the associated costs should be reduced;

Women's entrepreneurship should be designated as an objective of the national policy promoting small and medium-sized enterprises;

Belarusian banks should be assisted with the implementation of special programmes to provide financing to women-owned businesses;

Measures should be taken that generate interest in the development of women's entrepreneurship among heads of local government agencies;

Business education and information support for the activities of small and medium-size enterprises should be developed, specifically business schools (business incubators) where women entrepreneurs could learn to build innovative start-up businesses;

An advantageous microcredit system should be established to enable women to start and develop small and medium-sized enterprises;

Programmes and projects to develop women's entrepreneurship should be developed and implemented, including at the State level;

The collection of gender statistics at the national level should be enhanced by including the number of women and men involved in entrepreneurial activity;

A positive image of women entrepreneurs should be constructed and promoted and mass media should be actively recruited to contribute to this effort.

With regard to the principle of partnership and cross-sectoral cooperation, the conference participants recommend the following:

A social services procurement mechanism should be developed at the national and local levels;

Greater use should be made of public-private partnership mechanisms;

Civil society organizations, local public interest groups and established associations of local self-governing bodies should be used to promote cooperation among the country's provinces and regions;

Civil society organizations should be supported in their activities and growth as part of promoting sustainable development;

Greater engagement in decision-making should be encouraged at the national and local levels;

The women's movement should be actively promoted nationwide and partnerships between civil society organizations and government agencies should be expanded;

A women's network should be established in alliance with civil society organizations, the business sector and government authorities, including local authorities and parliamentary representatives;

Government officials who provide consulting and information services on matters related to the promotion of entrepreneurship, including officials working in local executive and administrative bodies, should receive regular training.

With regard to the development of social entrepreneurship in the country and its regions, the conference participants recommend the following:

Social entrepreneurship should be considered an effective mechanism for social investment;

The support and social business system should be enhanced at the national level and in the regions and constraints on its development should be eliminated;

A positive image of social entrepreneurship should be promoted to encourage investment in social business projects;

The Government should adopt a strategy to develop social entrepreneurship in Belarus, identify national priorities and prospective areas of activity suitable for social entrepreneurship and develop criteria for categorizing social businesses;

The principles of corporate social responsibility and socially-responsible approaches to business restructuring should be mainstreamed;

Civil society organizations and government agencies should step up their efforts in the implementation of a State social services procurement system.